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ABSTRACT

Making every school in America free of drugs and violence and fostering a disciplined environment conducive to learning by the year 2000 is the aim of the U.S. Department of Education's sixth National Education Goal. Research shows that drugs, violence, and discipline are related problems and are influenced by factors within schools, in the community, and in the relationship between the two. Controlling misbehavior is important to furthering effective teaching and learning. Also, alcohol and drug abuse seriously impedes students' personal growth and learning. Often related to misbehavior and drug problems is violence. Strong academic goals, clear discipline standards that are fair and consistent, and good staff-student relationships can improve school climate and help create an environment conducive to learning. Combating drug use must take into account the multiple risk factors many youth face, including individual psychological and interpersonal, family, and environmental factors. All groups inside the school and the community must be involved in ongoing efforts to provide information, develop resistance skills, and change community policies and norms. The problem of violence and weapons in schools also requires a comprehensive approach using prevention curricula and conflict resolution. Contains references to federal sources of publications and a list of 16 suggested readings. (JPT)

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Reaching The Goals

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GOAL

Safe · Disciplined · and Drug-Free Schools

EA 024 860

EA

Reaching The Goals

GOAL

6

Safe · Disciplined · and Drug-Free Schools

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Foreword

In determining sound educational practices for their schools and communities, policymakers, educators, and parents must often find their way through a maze of conventions, recommendations, and theories. Sometimes new research seems to conflict with established practice, with older research, or even with other current research. But does education research allow us to say anything with confidence about what works? In fact, while substantial gaps remain, we do know a great deal about what is effective in education.

In 1989, the President and the nation's 50 governors held an historic education summit that culminated in the adoption of six National Education Goals. These six broad Goals serve as a framework for much of the current reform movement. In order to help all those who are critical to its success—from parents to national policymakers—the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) has produced *Reaching the Goals*, a series of publications describing what we know from research on individual Goals, as well as the limits of that knowledge.

Each publication is the result of a deliberate process guided by work groups composed of talented individuals from various programs and offices within OERI, including the National Center for Education Statistics, the Office of Research, Programs for the Improvement of Practice, Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching, and Library Programs. Each task force was charged with assessing the state of research for a particular Goal and developing a research and dissemination agenda for OERI. Lengthier technical documents which formed the basis for these publications and include all relevant research citations, are available from OERI.

If we are to succeed in improving education and training to meet our ambitious National Education Goals, research must inform and encourage the development of sound policies and practices. By making available in a clear and understandable format the best research we have, these publications can be invaluable to those who are serious about reform.

For copies of the technical report

The technical report which formed the basis for this publication and which includes all relevant research citations is available from OERI by contacting OERI, Dept. EIB, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20208–5641.

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by the OERI Goal 6 Work Group, cochaired by Diane Aleem and Oliver Moles, from the group's technical report on the same subject. The Work Group shared the overall task of collecting information and structuring the technical report. Oliver Moles and Diane Aleem, with Vonnie Clement, wrote most sections of the technical report. Brian Rowan, of the University of Michigan, drafted the research section on the role of school climate and organization. Walter Doyle, of the University of Arizona, drafted the research section on classroom organization and management.

Under contract to OERI, Donald L. Hymes developed the initial draft of the publication from the technical report, the cochairs prepared the text, and Jacquelyn Zimmermann edited it.

Theodor Rebarber and Jeanette Randolph, Office of the Assistant Secretary, provided extensive review and comments and facilitated decision making within OERI. Many other OERI staff members made important contributions, too numerous to mention, at every stage of the Work Group's efforts.

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The *Reaching the Goals* series was developed under the leadership of Diane Ravitch while she was Assistant Secretary of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and Counselor to the Secretary.

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Executive Summary

The sixth National Education Goal states, "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." Surveys within the last 5 years show, however, that we are far from that goal. While the use of alcohol and other drugs among America's youth has declined in recent years, it is unacceptably high, and in a large percentage of our schools, violence, misbehavior, and a lack of engagement in learning interfere seriously with the education process.

Efforts to improve this situation have increased during the past decade, and the effectiveness of some of these efforts has been researched. This report is designed to share information with policymakers about both effective and ineffective approaches, as well as about those for which little research exists, so as to guide the development of programs that can succeed in realizing Goal 6.

A disciplined environment has been a cherished goal of educators even before the problems of drugs and violence disrupted schools. Maintaining a "disciplined environment conducive to learning" does not necessarily mean adopting tough policies to keep students silent in their seats. Rather, it means principals and teachers working together to develop appropriate curricula and instructional techniques in support of one overriding goal—to improve students' academic performance. The key here is to create an atmosphere in which students and teachers are engaged in learning and where misbehavior is dealt with quickly, firmly, and fairly. Most important, a learning environment requires an ethic of caring that shapes staff-student relationships. Changes in classroom organization and management may also be necessary to effectively maintain such an atmosphere. In some cases, these changes involve alternative settings where disruptive students receive special attention, counseling, and remediation.

Drug use prevention has shifted within the last 8 years from simplistic one-dimensional approaches to comprehensive programs. Studies show that many of the factors that put children at risk to become drug users are related, as are the protective factors that can possibly minimize the risks of drug use, violence, and disruptive behavior. It is also obvious that, since decisions about drug use are

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formulated by many in early adolescence, prevention programs must start in elementary school.

Successful drug use prevention programs combine the teaching of resistance skills with correcting students' often erroneous perceptions about the prevalence and acceptability of drugs among their peers. Some programs using student leaders have been more successful than those led by adults only, and prevention is sustained longer when a "booster" course is given on a regular basis. The most promising strategy is comprehensive—encompassing peer groups, families, schools, media, community organizations including religious and law enforcement groups, and a wide variety of approaches that provide information, develop life skills, use peer facilitators, and change community policies and norms.

In the area of violence reduction, solid research on the effects of different strategies is sparse. However, according to available evidence, coordinated school and community efforts seem promising. Within schools it seems clear that the best way to reduce youth violence is by creating an atmosphere that encourages students to focus their energies on learning. Firm, fair, and consistently applied student behavior standards play a part here, as does an ethic of caring for students by staff.

As teachers and principals in our nation's schools strive to attain Goal 6 in the next decade, research will provide more insight into the causes of drug use and violence afflicting so many of our young people, and the means of preventing them. While the roots of these ills may be deep in society, the schools can be very well positioned to reduce their incidence and their effects on learning. Armed with an understanding of the complex linkages among the factors that put children at risk, focusing on the related protective factors that may shelter children from these risks, and drawing on strong family and community involvement, our schools can become the healthy learning environments that are a strong defense against drug use and violence.

Review of Research on Ways To Attain Goal 6

Introduction

Goal 6 states: "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." While the use of alcohol and other drugs has declined in recent years, the current situation in many of our schools is still far from this goal.

Studies reveal the following profile:

- Seventy percent of public school students and 52 percent of private school students aged 12 through 19 reported in 1989 that drugs are available at their school;
- Nearly 13 percent of 8th-graders, 23 percent of 10th-graders, and 30 percent of 12th-graders had five or more drinks in a row in a 2-week period during the 1990–91 school year;
- At least 71 persons were killed with guns at school in the period 1986–90; and
- Nationwide, 44 percent of teachers reported in 1991 that student misbehavior interfered substantially with their teaching.

There is no question that safety and order are essential if learning is to take place. Yet the problems of drug use, violence, or discipline confront students and educators to some extent every day in virtually every school in the nation. Schools must address this crisis aggressively if they are to provide the quality of education that a healthy and prosperous nation requires.

Goal 6 covers three distinct problem areas, each with unique challenges. A disciplined environment conducive to learning must be provided by all schools. The other two, drugs and violence, are problems of society and schools alike. While these two problems are different, they are also related. Drug use is often linked to misbehavior in school, poor academic performance, dropping out, delinquency, and teenage pregnancy. Violence often plays a role in drug transactions and in getting money to buy drugs. The easy access to guns makes their use to settle turf battles and personal disputes

increasingly commonplace. Children who see violence and drug use around them may resort to the same high-risk behavior and means of handling conflicts in school.

Drug use and violence are also linked by their origins and can be encouraged or discouraged by various characteristics of the person, family, community, and school. Some of the common risk factors include poverty, high-crime neighborhoods, and ineffective schools. A high level of family conflict increases the likelihood of drug use and delinquency, as does a lack of positive parent-child attachments. Protective factors include effective parenting, positive relationships to competent adults, and personal skills in various fields.

Regardless of students' personal histories, however, the mission of America's schools is to educate and prepare all of them for a productive life. Schools impart knowledge and skills, transmit values, and help youth strive for success in learning in order to reach their life goals. With that role in mind, this report examines several aspects of schools and classrooms, their relationship to the community at large, and their effect on achieving Goal 6. The following topics are considered:

Classrooms

- Curricula and instructional techniques for preventing drug use and violence; and
- Organization and management for establishing and maintaining order.

Schools

- Number of students in each school;
- School climate or culture, which is the beliefs, values, and attitudes of staff and students regarding schools and learning;
- Goals emphasized, such as academic achievement or control of students;
- Persons and issues involved in leadership and decision making;
- Establishing procedures, and enforcing policies and rules; and
- Specialized roles and programs such as alternative schools.

School-community relationships

- School-community connections, for example coordinated drug use prevention and violence reduction activities; and
- Federal, state, and district education policies on drug use and discipline.

Finally, the three objectives under Goal 6 seek firm and fair school drug policies, comprehensive K–12 drug use prevention programs in schools, and community support for making schools safe and drug free. In response to federal regulations, most schools have certified that they have developed drug policies and comprehensive K–12 drug education and use prevention programs. We recognize that schools and school districts may choose additional strategies to attain Goal 6. This report examines many types of strategies.

Background

In this section the three Goal 6 topics—disciplined school environments, drug use, and violence—are treated in terms of the specific nature and extent of the problem. Because of its overarching importance, the topic of disciplined environments is reviewed first.

Disciplined School Environments

A "disciplined environment conducive to learning" refers to more than controlling misbehavior. It comprises maximizing intellectual and personal development as well as minimizing disruptions. A disciplined environment should ultimately help more students graduate from high school, the aim of Goal 2.

A "disciplined environment" relies not only on student behavior but especially on school organization and climate, classroom organization and management, and specific discipline policies and practices. When teachers can teach without interruptions and display real interest in their students, and when students and staff attend school regularly and are engaged in their work, then young people should also be less inclined to drop out of school.

From the teachers' perspective, 44 percent surveyed nationwide in 1991 reported that student misbehavior interfered to a considerable

extent with their teaching. And in 1986, 29 percent said they had seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior.

From the students' point of view, on the other hand, between 63 and 80 percent of eighth-graders felt that teachers are interested in them, really listen, praise their efforts, and teach well. All of these indicate that for most students, their teachers are working hard to provide a disciplined classroom environment.

While responses were similar across racial, gender, and ethnic lines, low-achieving students and frequent absentees had less positive attitudes toward their teachers. Such students are more alienated and need special efforts to engage them in learning.

Student absenteeism and tardiness have long signified less student involvement in learning. Yet teacher absenteeism and lack of involvement are seen by some principals as major problems at their schools, most often in urban and secondary schools.

Drugs and Schools

While important regional, racial, and economic differences exist regarding use preference, drug use affects all segments of the population. It has become increasingly evident over the past two decades that the use of alcohol and other drugs creates serious educational, social, and psychological problems for many preadolescents as well as adolescents. Tobacco is also included as a drug in this report due to its addictive nature, its long-term health risks, and the inclination of some young smokers to then try other drugs.

A 1990–91 survey shows an encouraging decline in the use of certain illicit substances. However, both the level of use and age of users are still very disturbing. Survey findings indicate that in 1991, a majority of adolescent students had tried alcohol—54 percent of 8th-graders and 72 percent of 10th-graders. Additionally, 78 percent of 12th-graders tried alcohol. Fourteen percent of 8th-graders, 21 percent of 10th-graders, and 28 percent of 12th-graders smoked cigarettes during the previous 30 days in the 1990–91 school year. Marijuana use is dropping but still 14 percent of seniors used it during the same period. Research shows that the younger children are when they start using tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana the more likely they are to progress from casual to regular use, and go on to use marijuana, crack, cocaine, and heroin.

Moreover, the use of alcohol and other drugs is often initiated, and attitudes and beliefs about it formed at ages 10–16. The startling result of a 1989 study reflects that 70 percent of public school students and 52 percent of private school students aged 12 through 19 reported that drugs are easily available at their school. Sixty percent in elementary school, and 68 percent in secondary school believed drugs are easily obtained on their campuses. While efforts have been under way for over 20 years to prevent drug problems from occurring at all, research clearly indicates that more attention must now be given to the elementary years.

Early intervention is essential for protecting youth from acquiring harmful habits. It would also alleviate the enormous cost of drug use to education. Poor school performance, misbehavior, truancy, dropping out, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and suicide are all associated with drug use, and impact the delivery of educational services. Thus educators in public and private elementary and secondary schools, whose primary responsibility should be the education of our youth, must instead spend an inordinate amount of their time and resources dealing with the many consequences and correlates of student drug and alcohol use.

Violence in Schools

Criminal violence in schools is a shocking but rather uncommon event. In a 1991 national survey, 2 percent of teachers at all levels reported being physically attacked, and 8 percent threatened with bodily harm in a 12-month period. Up to 23 percent of eighth grade students admitted being involved in fights with another student in the previous semester, and 12 percent expressed fear for their own safety in school. Serious discipline problems are more common. Nineteen percent of the teachers said they had been verbally abused by a student in the previous 4 weeks.

Repeated antisocial behavior among preadolescents, such as fighting and similarly disruptive activity, is considered likely to lead to later delinquency. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic levels commit more serious assaults in the community than those from higher levels. Communities with higher crime rates and gang warfare can expect more violence in their schools than those with less crime in their neighborhoods. Family factors directly related to serious offenses include lack of parental supervision, indifference or rejection, and criminal behavior of parents.

A large national study in 1976 that helped launch the investigation of crime in schools showed that junior (vs. senior) high schools, and schools with more male students, larger enrollments, and larger classes experienced more violence, as did those schools lacking strict and fair administration of discipline.

Student attitudes also seem to foster violence. It has been shown to be more prevalent where students (1) felt their classes did not teach them what they wanted to learn; (2) did not consider their grades important; (3) did not plan to go to college; and (4) felt they had no influence over their own lives.

It is evident, therefore, that personal, family, school, and community factors all contribute to violence in schools. Efforts to reduce discipline problems and violence in schools need to consider these multiple sources of the problem.

Research: How Does It Help Us Meet the Goal?

We now turn to research on how to meet Goal 6 through school-based programs and practices that address the unacceptable level of youth drug use and violence. Since a disciplined environment is essential for implementing such practices, we first review research on that topic, and follow with the research on drug use and violence prevention.

Disciplined School Environments

A disciplined environment is a worthwhile goal for every school. Even the most trouble-free and high-achieving environment needs continued reinforcement, and children and teachers need support to remain focused on their tasks. This is all the more important, and certainly more difficult, in an atmosphere of violence and defiance. Two broad areas related to disciplined environments are discussed here: school climate and organization, and classroom organization and management. Each includes discipline policy and practice issues.

The Role of School Climate and Organization

It is common wisdom that discipline and learning go hand in hand. Learning requires a pattern of behavior that includes regular attendance in class, active engagement in lessons, and completion of class and homework assignments. A school's climate influences the extent to which this pattern is developed. Research over the past decade has uncovered important differences in climate from school to school that cannot be attributed solely to differences in students' social background. Among the factors that affect school climate, three are especially important:

- Goals: A strong emphasis on the school's academic mission;
- Rules and procedures: Clear discipline standards that are firmly, fairly, and consistently enforced; and
- Staff/student relationships: An ethic of caring that guides interpersonal relationships in the school.

While each one of these factors can affect student behavior and learning, when they occur in combination they constitute a powerful school "ethos" or culture—a coherent force that makes students work harder, minimizes disruption, and leads to increased student achievement.

Researchers often find that schools with such cultures are identifiable by the positive attitudes of students and teachers. For example, in schools that emphasize academics, students care more about getting good grades, are more interested in their coursework, and, in secondary schools, do more homework and take more academic courses. Teachers in these schools have a higher sense of teaching mastery, hold higher expectations for their students, are more committed to the continuous improvement of instruction, and derive more enjoyment and satisfaction from their work. Not surprisingly, they report less absenteeism.

In schools with clear discipline standards, students and teachers feel safe and they have a clear understanding of school rules. Furthermore, students feel the rules are fair. Teachers say they treat all students equally, they can turn to counselors for advice to deal with misbehaving students, and they get up-to-date information about problem students from the administration.

In schools with a strong ethic of caring, students feel their teachers like them. They tell researchers that their teachers are good

and care about them, and that they value their teachers' opinions. At the same time, teachers report knowing more students in the school, including those who are not in their classes, and report higher levels of staff cooperation and support.

Researchers and policy analysts have suggested that schools can create disciplined environments conducive to learning by implementing changes in the following three areas:

Changes in curricular standards and organization. The first goal is to bring more focus to the school curriculum. At the elementary level, this means establishing clear instructional objectives, aligning materials and tests to these objectives, and monitoring student progress frequently. In secondary schools, studies have shown that raising graduation requirements spurs students to take more academic courses. Whether higher standards also result in more course failure, which is itself linked to adolescent problem behavior, is an open question. In addition, while competency tests sharpen the focus of the high school curriculum, the effects of state and district policies governing course requirements and competency testing remain unclear.

Systems of academic tracking and ability grouping dilute the mission of the school, especially for low-achieving students. In such systems, low achievers are exposed to less rigorous courses and their teachers have lower expectations for their success. Furthermore, students in low-ability groups are more likely to misbehave, and middle and high schools with less tracking and ability grouping seem to have fewer discipline problems.

Changes in school organization. In this second area recommended for change, researchers have focused on studying the size of schools and classes, assuming that smaller educational settings may improve relationships among teachers and students. Research confirms that smaller schools indeed foster better discipline.

The shift from a single teacher for most subjects in elementary schools to departmentalized classes in secondary schools represents a significant difference for school climate. Departmentalization results in teachers having many more students which, in turn, discourages personal relationships among students and teachers. In contrast, self-contained classrooms in middle schools have fewer students, permitting more opportunities for student-teacher relationships. Other research has shown that middle schools with self-contained

classrooms or team-teaching arrangements have fewer discipline problems and higher academic achievement.

In schools with disciplined environments, the teachers' work extends beyond the classroom. Their participation in extracurricular activities leads to positive and more personal relationships with students. There are fewer disruptions when teachers themselves take the responsibility for discipline in the hallways as well as in the classrooms.

Seriously disruptive students are being educated to an increasing degree in alternative settings, either in separate rooms or separate schools. Several studies of alternative schools show greater satisfaction on the part of students, more positive attitudes, and better behavior than before. One study of 18 alternative high schools found that student behavior was rarely a problem. The authors suggest this may be due to the schools' relatively small size, easier interaction between staff and students, and a lack of conflicting expectations.

When very close control was introduced as part of one alternative program, however, delinquent behavior increased. And according to labeling theory, putting "troublesome" youth into separate programs could stigmatize them, making improvement more difficult. Therefore, while alternative schools appear promising, program structure seems to have significant effects on students.

In general, smaller schools, self-contained classrooms, and an extended role for teachers all promote better discipline, probably through more personalized relationships with teachers which convey a greater sense of caring.

Changes in school management. In the final area where researchers found change fruitful for developing a disciplined environment, leadership by principals is clearly critical. While less effective principals devote more time to routine administrative tasks, effective principals attend more to instructional leadership by highlighting instructional goals and priorities. They take an active role in promoting school discipline; set firm and fair standards, and ensure that they are consistently enforced; and pay more attention to interpersonal relations in the school.

Principals alone, however, cannot shape the school environment. Research repeatedly finds that schools with disciplined environments are distinguished by teacher participation in decision making.

School management of discipline has commonly included the development of student discipline codes, due process in suspensions, the use of suspension, and in-school alternatives to suspension. Each of these is reviewed below.

Regarding discipline codes, a recent report by the New Jersey Education Commissioner, for example, recommended that districts develop policies to protect students and staff from disruptive behavior, promote pride and respect for persons and property, and hold students accountable without being oppressive or unfair. It inferred that a good discipline policy contributes to feelings of self-worth and high morale. Another study of school districts elsewhere came to the same conclusion, but neither study measured the actual effects of discipline policies on students.

In developing discipline codes, the rights of students, expectations about student conduct, prohibitions, sanctions, and disciplinary procedures need to be considered. And support for the policies is best secured by involving staff in their development. Student involvement in developing discipline codes, however, is not so clearly necessary for reducing violence.

The practice of due process received bad press after the Supreme Court ruled in 1975 that even in suspensions of less than 10 days school officials must justify the suspension and hear the student's side of the story. While a surge in lawsuits against schools was anticipated for non-compliance, it did not materialize. The fears that such due process procedures would impose excessive hardship on school administrators were unfounded: a national survey of secondary school principals showed that only 3 percent considered these procedures a burden. In fact, many principals invite parents to hearings, allow third-party evidence, and establish an appeals process. As noted above, fairness such as this is an essential element in deterring misbehavior.

Suspension itself, however, has not been a successful discipline measure. While it temporarily rids the school of misbehaving youth, suspension also deprives those students of instructional time, and discharges them into the community, often without supervision. In many cases, suspension reinforces truants' desire for free time, rather than helping to improve their behavior. This is not an insignificant problem since more than 1 million students were suspended from school in 1990–91. Rates were higher in secondary schools, in those with a large student population, and in areas with high concentrations of low-income families. And equally as troubling,

statistics show that suspensions are applied more frequently against minority students.

Short-term in-school alternatives to suspension are used even more widely than suspension: 1.4 million students were sent to such programs in 1990–91. These programs exist in 75 percent of all schools, and they range from total isolation to academic remediation and counseling outside the classroom. Early studies showed a drop in suspension rates after in-school alternatives were introduced, but now it appears that in-school suspension is being used merely as a punishment for less serious offenses, and that it has lost its effectiveness as a deterrent. One reason may be that most of the alternatives do not include academic tutoring or counseling, which should help re-engage students with learning.

The research on school management suggests that leadership, and planning by principals and teachers together to reach instructional and disciplinary goals constitute a more effective strategy than the common approaches of suspension or its in-school alternatives.

Remaining Questions Regarding School Climate and Organization

The studies reviewed here tend to examine school curriculum, organization, and management as separate fields rather than as related components of a complex structure. It is unlikely, however, that a disciplined environment results from change in any one of these discrete areas alone. Instead, it probably requires a multiyear, multidimensional approach to change that involves concurrent attention to school curriculum and instruction, organization, governance, and social relations.

Questions also remain about how the administrative contexts of schooling affect the chances that large numbers of schools will be able to develop disciplined environments conducive to learning. The regulation of public schools by district, state, and federal authorities may handicap them in achieving a positive school climate. It is the case, however, that some public schools have managed to do it despite tight regulations or mandates in such areas as personnel and special programs. Studies of these successful schools would be useful.

The Role of Classroom Organization and Management

Research on the role of classroom organization and management focuses on structures and processes, and especially on actions taken by teachers, that promote order and student involvement which, in turn, help students attain curriculum objectives.

This research has some limitations. First, with few exceptions, it has focused on elementary school classrooms. Therefore caution is necessary in applying the findings to high schools. Second, since few studies have been done on severely disrupted classrooms, it is not clear how much of the information can be applied in classrooms with serious or frequent disruptions. Finally, the bulk of this research has been done on the process of social organization in the classroom. Its audience is teachers rather than policymakers, and its implications for policy are not always clear.

Establishing and maintaining order. In classroom management, "order" does not necessarily mean silence or rigid compliance with externally imposed rules at all times. Rather, it is defined as reasonable cooperation by a class in the program of instruction which may require movement, conversation, and noise. Cooperation is an agreement between teachers and students, and does not rely on directions from higher administrative levels.

Teachers achieve and maintain order by introducing, monitoring, and guiding complex action systems that organize their students to accomplish curriculum tasks. Success depends on how well teachers understand these action systems, and how effectively they can adjust them in a timely and appropriate manner when circumstances warrant it.

Successful managers introduce rules, procedures, and routines, preferably at the beginning of the year, to increase the efficiency and predictability of classroom events. A key to their success is monitoring. Teachers must be aware of what is going on in their classroom, and must be able to attend to two or more incidents at the same time. The concept of monitoring—what teachers watch when scanning a room—has at least three dimensions:

- Teachers watch groups, remaining aware of the entire room and how well the total activity is going;
- Teachers watch conduct or behavior, paying particular attention to students' deviations from the intended program of action in order to stop them early; and

- Teachers monitor the pace, rhythm, and duration of classroom events.

Classroom arrangements and teaching styles. The physical characteristics of a classroom, including the closeness of students, the arrangement of desks, and the design of the building (open space or self-contained) have an impact on students' behavior, and the teacher's ability to control it. In general, the more loosely structured the setting, the more likely inappropriate behavior will occur. Similarly, the greater the amount of student activity choice and mobility, the greater the need for overt management and control by the teacher.

Demands on teachers in managing their classrooms change according to the nature of classroom activities. In general, where student involvement is highest—in teacher-led small groups—misbehavior is rare. Conversely, student participation is lowest and misbehavior is common during pupil presentations. Between these extremes, participation is higher in whole-class recitation, tests, and teacher presentations than in supervised study, independent seatwork, and student-led small groups.

Highly structured forms of cooperative learning have been shown to increase student achievement levels as measured by standardized tests, but only if the activities incorporate both group goals and individual accountability. This finding should not be generalized to include all forms of small group instruction, as these are not necessarily forms of "cooperative learning." In fact, small group instruction is often a problem from the perspectives of management, curriculum, and student learning. Poorly designed tasks can shift students' attention from content to procedural matters. There is often an emphasis on drill and practice rather than on problem solving, making students passive rather than active learners.

Curriculum and classroom order. The complexity of work assigned to students has a direct effect on order. When academic work is routine and familiar to the students, like spelling tests or regular worksheet exercises, the flow of classroom activity is usually smooth and well-paced. When the work is problem centered—when students are required to interpret situations and make decisions to accomplish tasks, such as with word problems or essays—the flow of activity becomes slow and uneven. Since this is contrary to the assumption that challenging assignments automatically engage students in their work, teachers must be aware that managing higher order tasks requires exceptional management skill.

The tension between the need for classroom order and the need for the freedom to explore and solve problems is a core issue in a disciplined educational environment. Clearly, school policies that define order as silence and conformity can force a teacher to emphasize drill and practice, and preclude valued curriculum experiences. Schools must recognize the demands of loosely structured settings and open-ended tasks, and provide teachers the support they need to solve the problems these patterns can generate.

It is axiomatic that teacher expectations have a significant effect on student achievement. Low expectations are associated with lower achievement. If a teacher is convinced that certain students are low achievers and gives them only easy tasks, avoids calling on them, and prompts them excessively, they will probably become more passive and avoid academic work. But higher expectations themselves are not enough. They must be backed up with deliberate efforts to help the student learn. Then as students experience success, their perceptions of the school and of themselves as learners improve. These positive attitudes contribute to a more disciplined environment.

Dealing with misbehavior. Misbehavior is defined as any disruption in the primary program of activity in a classroom. It usually affects the level of attention, crowd control, and productivity. In many cases misbehavior is public—visible to a significant portion of a class—and contagious—capable of spreading rapidly among classmates. As already noted, misbehavior is more common in situations where students are easily distracted from academic work, and where class activities are frequently interrupted.

Teachers usually feel compelled to interrupt the whole class to stop misbehavior. But in calling attention to potentially disruptive behavior, this approach risks sidetracking the class even further from its primary activity, thus undermining rather than ensuring classroom order. A more effective response to misbehavior is to use a variety of unobtrusive nonverbal signals—gestures, direct eye contact, or proximity. If verbal reprimands seem necessary, "Shh," "Wait," "Stop," or "No" are appropriate. This approach, used at the onset of misbehavior, is likely to cause no additional disruption.

There are a number of commercial discipline models, but, aside from teachers' testimonials, very little is known about their effectiveness in reducing misbehavior. Certainly there is little concrete proof of the exaggerated claims of benefits often made by the promoters of these systems.

Behavior modification techniques, involving privileges, soft verbal reprimands, and other reinforcements for appropriate behavior, have been widely recommended for their proven success as tools for helping teachers work with problem students. In many settings, however, the practicality of implementing them is at issue. Also at issue is the detrimental effect that heavy reliance on rewarding students for good behavior or academic performance can have in the long run on inherent motivation. For these reasons, more attention has been given recently to social skills and coping strategies which are less cumbersome and intrusive than behavior modification.

Corporal punishment is practiced widely, and the Supreme Court has ruled that it is not cruel and unusual punishment. Nevertheless, more than a third of the states ban the practice in their public schools. Supporters of corporal punishment argue that it is effective, inexpensive, quick, and often the only means of maintaining order. Critics, on the other hand, charge that it is used disproportionately against male and minority students, and that it is dehumanizing, physically and psychologically harmful, and sends a message that violence is an acceptable way to handle problems.

In addition, the effectiveness of corporal punishment is questionable since students who are punished may actually gain status among their peers. It also seems to cause resentment and undermine working relationships. Therefore, in view of its potentially negative effects and the lack of systematic evidence of any benefits, corporal punishment might best be avoided as a method for controlling behavior.

Policies and classroom processes. Little research has been done on how state or district policies actually affect what goes on in classrooms. Policies based on research about teaching are often simplistic. They tend to highlight quantity—more time, more courses, more homework—rather than quality and substance. Since quality and substance are central to the issue of achievement, policies need to be focused there.

Certain policies present many potential pitfalls for their enforcement. For example, testing programs that call for rote learning, or mandates to adopt uniform practices to address complex problems, can narrow the curriculum, lower teacher morale, and undermine student motivation. Similarly, classroom discipline codes that require passivity, obedience, and control can sabotage efforts to promote true learning.

Student outcomes is a central issue in policy discussions and research about classroom processes. All too often, the focus is on mandated standardized achievement tests which, for the most part, measure lower level skills. As the focus in the national curriculum debate shifts toward higher order skills, conceptual understanding, problem solving, and self-regulation for all students, research and policymaking must also refocus on the design and management of curriculum tasks with similar objectives. Working toward creating classrooms conducive to this kind of active learning is also important for attaining Goal 3 which is concerned with helping students "learn to use their minds well."

Conclusions Regarding Classroom Organization and Management

Several major implications for policy and practice emerge from the studies of classroom management:

- The beginning of the school year is a critical time for establishing classroom order. Teachers must be supported in achieving a well-run classroom as early as possible. Classroom interruptions and abrupt changes in class enrollments can seriously impede this process.
- The rhythms and patterns of classroom life should be respected. Interruptions during the year should be minimized, and teachers should be warned in advance if schedule changes will affect their classes. This approach tells students that learning is important, and makes the flow of classroom work predictable.
- Teachers need support to learn about approaches for maintaining well-managed classrooms that do not rely on rigid definitions of order. In such classrooms, order promotes the use of a variety of instructional activities to maximize engagement in learning.
- Finally, schoolwide policies and support systems are needed to deal with serious misbehavior. Such policies clarify issues and create a climate for addressing problems. A well-functioning support system means that a teacher is not isolated when confronted with a serious disruption.

Drugs and Schools

The drug use prevention field has evolved toward greater effectiveness. Today, rather than targeting one or two risk factors, such as low self-esteem and poor school achievement, effective programs take into account the multitude of risk factors facing many youth, and put into play a combination of strategies to address them. In this section, we review the research on strategies for defining and addressing the drug problem faced by schools and their communities, and indicate which ones seem to have the most significant impact on the prevention of drug use.

Risk and Protective Factors for Alcohol and Other Drug Use

The widespread availability of legal and illicit drugs puts all adolescents potentially at risk. Yet some are at higher risk than others due to a variety of individual, family, and other environmental factors that seem to influence a child's first use of drugs.

Individual psychological and interpersonal factors. These include needing the approval of others; letting others make one's decisions; being unassertive; having low self-confidence; and showing early aggressive and antisocial behavior, low commitment to school, and poor school performance. One of the strongest predictors of drug use by teens is their association with drug-using peers, as well as their attitude about drugs. Beginning in the early elementary grades, academic failure increases the risk both of drug use and of delinquency. Conversely, some of the protective factors that appear to bolster a child's resistance to drug use are self-confidence; strong social competencies; peers who value achievement and responsible behavior; and clear adult supervision.

Family factors. Tolerance of substance abuse by parents and older siblings can be compounded by a family history of alcoholism, drug use, and mental illness, and poor family management and parenting skills. While parents who abuse drugs are more likely to have drug-abusing children, the question of the relative influence of heredity and environment has not been resolved. It is clear, however, that parents who are considerate and supportive, yet firm in their beliefs, can protect their adolescent children from drug use. And parents who monitor their children's activities carefully and influence their choice of friends are more effective in preventing experimentation with drugs.

Broader environmental factors. These include community norms regarding alcohol and other drugs, and their real or perceived availability; unclear or inconsistently enforced rules and laws; community characteristics like poverty, mobility, and violence; and contradictory messages in the media about drug use. All of these factors present opportunities for delivering inconsistent messages regarding drug use. Since one of the most direct influences on a child's drug use is the number of drug-using friends, it is essential—and proven effective for drug use prevention—to provide children with accurate information about the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among their peers. In particular, the mass media and advertisements affect drug use among young people by targeting them for messages about its attractiveness. These messages can be more powerful than public service announcements that address drug use as a problem.

The transitions to middle, junior, and senior high school are moves to progressively less protected environments. Schools can compensate for this instability in many ways by guiding and supporting students' daily social and recreational, as well as educational activities, improving their self-concept by recognizing a variety of student accomplishments, and by facilitating a variety of student groupings and interactions. Students who like school and have a close relationship with teachers are more likely to adopt nonuse norms than those who do not.

The strength of religious commitment is also associated with less alcohol and other drug use.

Targeting Multiple Factors

Most drug use prevention strategies or efforts target two risk factors in particular—laws and norms favorable to drug use, and social influences. Current evidence suggests, however, that an effective strategy must target a broad spectrum of risk and protective factors related to individual vulnerability, inadequate rearing, school achievement, social influences, social skills, and broad social norms.

The challenge for the 1990s is to develop and implement strategies that help youth succeed in staying drug free, in spite of adverse conditions in their families, schools, and communities. Caring and supportive relationships; high expectations for appropriate choices and behavior; and the availability of a variety of opportunities to participate and contribute in meaningful ways: these three protective factors are seen as essential for healthy development across the three

domains of family, school, and communities. And strong collaborations among these groups are required to achieve healthy development in our youth.

Within the family. Parents can nurture a close bond with their child throughout childhood and adolescence; create expectations for their child's success; provide human warmth, clear rules, and discipline; instill beliefs that provide stability and meaning to their child's life, especially in times of hardship and adversity; and treat their child as a valued, contributing member of the family.

Within the school. Teachers can acknowledge their role not only as instructors, but as caregivers. They can be confidants and positive role models for students. They can also encourage relationships with caring peers and friends through, for example, peer programs and cooperative learning strategies. Successful schools—those with low levels of delinquency and misbehavior, and high levels of attendance and academic attainment—make available a variety of opportunities that engage students' interest and desire to succeed. Students are expected to be actively engaged in problem solving, decision making, planning, goal setting, and helping others.

Within the community. The community can coordinate its available resources in the areas of health and child care, housing, education, job training, employment, and recreation to address the needs of children and families. The community can also view prevention of drug use as a shared value and responsibility, and establish norms accordingly. By providing young people with opportunities to be meaningful participants and contributors in community life, the community gives evidence that it values them as resources.

Prevention Strategies

Primary prevention strategies are defined as activities that deter youth from using alcohol and drugs by helping them develop mature positive attitudes, values, behaviors, skills, and life-styles. Following are common interventions and a brief comment on what research indicates about their impact.

Laws and regulations. Evidence suggests that laws and regulations can play a supportive role in controlling alcohol use provided these laws are clearly communicated, supported by the community, and equitably enforced. For example, a decline in drinking has been due partly to the enactment of laws raising the legal drinking age to 21.

This has resulted in reducing alcohol-related traffic deaths as well as reinforcing the control of alcohol use.

School policies. Almost all public school districts and private schools address drug use in their overall disciplinary policies. Most of these policies have changed significantly since 1986 with the passage of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. Another influence on local policy came from the new guidelines tying federal funds to establishing standards regarding drug use, possession, and sale, as well as to implementing a drug use prevention program in grades K–12. The systemwide impact of these changes, however, has not been determined.

Since 1986, drug policies have evolved in two distinct directions: (1) the adoption of a strong "zero tolerance" approach leading to strong punishments like long-term suspension or expulsion; and (2) the recognition that policy enforcement is not an end in itself but must be combined with rehabilitation. A policy of zero tolerance gives many students a safe haven—an opportunity to say no in a setting where being drug free is the norm and drug use is prohibited. Schools that aggressively involve parents with a zero tolerance approach create a strong partnership which boosts the chances for program success. In fact, extensive parent and community involvement is essential if any new policy is to be effective.

In the case of combining enforcement with rehabilitation, one Arizona school district provides a carefully monitored alternative to suspension, including mandatory intensive counseling, periodic urinalysis, and community service. It gives parents and students a chance to weigh the choice between rehabilitation with a view to a drug-free life and further education, or loss of the opportunity to continue school due to suspension or expulsion.

Information programs. Virtually all prevention programs include an information component to address the consequences of substance use. Information is deemed to be necessary, but not by itself a sufficient component of a prevention program. There is no clear evidence that programs relying on information only or on strategies for arousing fear prevent students from using tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. A recent report concluded that information-only substance-use education may alter knowledge and attitudes but rarely changes a student's drug-using behavior. Anti-smoking efforts, on the other hand, have been somewhat more successful.

There is also evidence of success from programs that conduct media campaigns. There is some controversy among experts about the wisdom of emphasizing "designated drivers" or safe rides and moderate drinking rather than abstinence for those under the legal drinking age. Nevertheless, all of these activities support efforts to reduce automobile crashes, and, according to a 1992 statewide study in Minnesota, there has been some decline over a 3-year period in students riding with friends who have been drinking.

Affective education programs. These programs focus on self-examination, self-esteem, responsible decision making, and values clarification, but seldom relate these general skills to resisting specific drug situations. Most studies show such programs have little effect on reducing tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use. When there is evidence of effectiveness, the benefits appear somewhat more likely for reducing marijuana and tobacco use than alcohol use.

Social influence/resistance strategies. There are two key components of such programs. The first is training in refusal skills, which identifies the sources of pressure and teaches how to counter them. The second is norm setting, which involves correcting the perception that drugs are widely used and accepted by peers. Youth in the experimental stage of drug use tend to grossly overestimate the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among their peers, which sets up internally driven pressures to conform to these assumed peer patterns.

Resistance activities led by students are more effective than those led by teachers, according to some studies. This is partly due to greater consistency in curriculum implementation by peer facilitators.

However, while students who receive resistance training have greater knowledge of the social pressures to use alcohol, and of the methods to resist them, this does not necessarily translate into an ability to say "no." In fact, the research shows that resistance skills training by itself has little effect on the onset of either tobacco, alcohol, or marijuana use. When norm-setting education was studied separately from refusal skills training, it was found to have a greater impact.

Student support and assistance services. Student support and assistance services are defined as nonacademic services provided by the school that work in concert with other prevention program efforts. They include activities such as student support groups, mentoring programs, and drug-free events, and are primarily

designed for students who are currently using or abusing alcohol and other drugs, or who are considered at high risk for developing substance-related problems. Unfortunately, the evidence for the effectiveness of student support and assistance programs is limited given the absence of a solid base of research.

Alternative activities and programs. These interventions attempt to prevent drug use by changing parts of the adolescent's environment. They provide positive activities or focus on overcoming deficiencies in basic life skills, low self-worth, and experiences that place adolescents at risk. A limited number of studies have shown that high-intensity programs that empower high-risk youth, like drug abusers and juvenile delinquents, to master new basic life skills are linked to improved behavior and achievement. The impact of such programs on drug use prevention is less evident.

The Importance of Ongoing Prevention Activities

Follow-up studies indicate that the effects of prevention efforts gradually erode and then vanish after 4 or 5 years. A booster strategy can effectively extend initial prevention efforts. For example, a "booster curriculum" was designed to reinforce material taught the previous year in a seventh grade substance use prevention program. Since the results were far better than when the booster curriculum was not implemented, it became clear that resistance is maintained at a higher level when students receive periodic, sequential, and meaningful booster sessions. While the ideal duration of prevention programs is not clear, it is obvious that the effects of the powerful factors leading to drug use cannot be eliminated in a few classes during one or two semesters of middle school. These programs must be more intensive and sustained to have a lasting impact. Therefore, interventions beginning in elementary, middle, and junior high schools need to continue through high school.

Future Directions in Drug Use Prevention

Based on testimony from experts in the field, as well as a cross section of students, teachers, school administrators, parents, and community representatives, the National Commission on Drug-Free Schools recommended in 1990 that comprehensive drug education and use prevention programs include the following elements:

- Student surveys to determine the nature and extent of the drug problem, school needs assessments, and resource identification;

- Leadership training for key school officials and staff;
- Clear, consistent school policies, with responses to violations that include alternatives to suspension;
- Training for the entire staff on the effects of drug use, the school's drug policies and policy implementation program, intervention, and referral of students for rehabilitation;
- Assistance programs and support for students from preschool through 12th grade;
- Training for parents to assist them in understanding drug use prevention, and related issues and concerns; and
- Current, factually accurate, age-appropriate, and developmentally oriented curriculum for preschool through 12th grade.

Similarly, a 1992 report of the Government Accounting Office focused on 10 comprehensive community-based drug use prevention programs targeting 10- to 13-year-old high-risk youth in rural and urban settings. While the effectiveness of these programs was not assessed, a number of their promising features were identified by the authors as follows:

- A comprehensive strategy;
- An indirect rather than a direct approach or one labeled "drug prevention";
- A focus on empowering young people by teaching them the broad range of skills they need to choose positive, constructive options;
- A participatory approach that requires group cooperation, planning, and coordination to accomplish tasks;
- A culturally relevant approach; and
- Highly structured activities appropriate for younger adolescents aged 9 through 12.

Conclusions Regarding Drug Use Prevention

It appears that the most effective strategies against drug use target both multiple risk and protective factors. They are comprehensive and encompass many social systems—peer groups, families, schools, media, community organizations including religious and law enforcement groups. In addition, they apply a wide variety of approaches

that provide information, develop life skills, use peer facilitators, and change community policies and norms. Success is enhanced by community support and the involvement of parents and peers. The teacher also plays a critical role, and thus teacher training in this area is essential.

Despite the progress made over the past decade, however, much work remains to be done on virtually all aspects of this critical issue. Research must continue to determine the effectiveness and long-term impact of various approaches to drug use prevention, and the means of overcoming the barriers to success.

Violence in the Schools

Research on reducing violence in schools is sparse. Nevertheless, we have reliable information about the nature of various threats to school safety, and on the relative effectiveness of some safety-enhancing strategies.

Weapons

Students may bring weapons to school for many reasons: to show off, to protect themselves, to be aggressive, to hold them for others, and even to use in gang or drug-related activity. Although knives are most common, powerful firearms are becoming more readily available. The fact that there are weapons in schools is an indication of their easy access in the community, their presence in many homes, and the apparent widespread attitude that violence is an acceptable way to solve problems.

Various approaches have been tried to keep weapons out of school buildings. Stationary metal detectors at the school entrance and random searches with hand-held detectors are commonplace in some cities. Other schools lock outside doors, search student lockers, and employ campus security patrols. There is no real evidence of how well any of these approaches works, and each has certain shortcomings. Metal detectors have become especially controversial. While they are easy to set up, require little training, and are effective in spotting weapons, they are opposed by some as an invasion of privacy. They also can cause a logjam at the door, and in general create an unwanted image of schools as fortresses. Locked doors can be a hazard in the event of fire, and patrols and searches are time consuming and expensive.

Educators and school security experts know of many practices against weapons that may warrant further study. They include encouraging tips from students, displaying posters condemning guns in schools and listing a hotline telephone number, requiring coats and book bags to be kept in lockers, offering violence prevention courses and peer counseling programs, and responding immediately to trouble with suspension or expulsion. However, expulsion simply transfers the problem to the streets, and is not a realistic long-term solution.

Overall, strategies to keep weapons out of schools have not been tested on a systematic basis. Most of them are attempts to control student behavior rather than to address the factors contributing to the behavior. While control may be important to stabilize threatening situations, such strategies may be less useful in the long run than changing school practices so that students are more engaged in academic work.

Intruders

Many schools are particularly concerned about barring unwanted and potentially dangerous visitors. Some of the methods used to keep out weapons can be used to bar intruders, but their use is controversial and their worth unproven. For example, electro-magnetic locks can be installed on exit doors likely to be used by intruders, and be set to open when the fire alarm sounds. New schools or additions can be designed with these security problems in mind.

Supervision by staff members may help secure entrances, and security monitors can be given police powers to remove intruders. Staff and students who stay after school are advised to avoid remote areas, move around in groups, and lock inside doors. However, the effectiveness of any of these precautions, as well as the use of security officers or aides, has not been documented by systematic studies. New programs to bar intruders must be well planned and their intended and unintended results monitored before implementing them permanently.

Fights and Assaults

Incidents like these involve bodily harm or threats, as well as robberies. This is one area where curricular approaches dealing with violence prevention and conflict management have been implemented with some success.

The Violence Prevention Curriculum Project is perhaps the earliest and best known of these. This approach examines anger and how to channel it constructively, while offering alternative means of resolving conflict. A six-city evaluation showed some benefits to self-esteem and reductions in fights and arrests. While there were problems in implementing the study and a follow-up would be desirable, this is a promising program that has also been extended into the community.

In the past decade, several programs have been developed to teach conflict resolution skills to students. Some include peer mediation and staff training. They aim to encourage self-discipline, effective decision making skills, and nonviolent responses to disputes. Interest in this approach is so great that the *Healthy People 2000* report of the U.S. Public Health Service calls for teaching nonviolent conflict resolution skills in half the nation's schools by the end of this decade.

A review of many of these conflict resolution programs concluded that they showed some benefits for the peer mediators, the student body, and the teachers. Success rates of mediation were generally high, student attitudes toward conflict changed, and fewer fights were reported. It should be noted, however, that these and other skills training programs involve changing people's behavior directly. Another promising preventive approach is to change school practices, such as tracking, that set up the conditions leading to student conflicts.

Gangs

Young people may become involved with gangs for various reasons, such as power and prestige, peer pressure, self-preservation, adventure, and money. Like many organizations, gangs have a name and distinguishing features, continuing members, and a territory. But these groups are engaged in criminal activities, and they appear to be spreading from large cities to suburbs, smaller towns, and previously gang-free regions of the country to avoid police and rival gangs, and to expand drug markets.

Without the powers of law enforcement agencies, schools may best try to create a nurturing environment for students where success becomes an attractive alternative to gang activity. There is little research in this area but lots of advice, much of it mirroring those activities designed to deal with drugs and violence. These include training staff about gangs, enforcing procedures to keep out

intruders, eliminating gang graffiti and insignias, adopting clear and consistent discipline standards, creating alternative programs for disruptive students, teaching students social skills to help them make wise choices, and maintaining close coordination with the police, other agencies, and parents.

The most extensive research on cities with chronic gang problems indicates that the most effective approach for preventing gang membership combines education and job training opportunities with interagency networking and grass-roots participation in agencies serving youth.

Coordination With the Community

A stated objective under Goal 6 is that parents, businesses, and community organizations will work together to make schools "a safe haven for all children." Their work may take a number of forms, including those listed above, to reduce gang problems. A recent review of community-based interventions (mostly without school involvement) concluded, however, that there is little evidence of their effectiveness for preventing delinquency. This result is probably due to measurement difficulties, as well as to the many related influences and interactions among community, family, and individual factors in behavior.

There is a bit more information on violence prevention programs involving collaborations between schools and the community. Although once again the evaluations are incomplete, two programs are particularly promising.

One is an extension of the Violence Prevention Curriculum, described above, into surrounding neighborhoods via multiservice and health centers, boys and girls clubs, recreation programs, and other similar activities. These efforts were also promoted through media campaigns. The city of Boston supports this project which receives many requests for training and technical assistance.

The second promising program, the Paramount Plan in California, consists of a curriculum for fifth- and seventh-graders on alternatives to gang membership. It features meetings for parents and family counseling for teens at high risk for joining gangs. After participating in this program, 90 percent of the students responded negatively to the idea of joining a gang and still held that attitude a year later.

A program called SMART (School Management and Resource Teams), which coordinates schools and law enforcement agencies, has been introduced in over 20 cities. Reports and analyses of violent incidents are disseminated to local teams for action planning. The staff coordinates districtwide policies and procedures on student behavior, and develops cooperative relationships with police and other government agencies. In one district, those discipline problems receiving attention declined more than did other problems. Inter-agency cooperation was difficult to assess, however, and in an earlier 2-year three-city development phase, its implementation had barely begun.

Thus, many of the common strategies used to deal with school violence remain untested. Other approaches that involve coordinated efforts appear more promising, but still need to be fully evaluated.

Conclusion

Drug use, school misbehavior, and violence are sometimes the acts of the same students, and they often have common origins. Despite the similarities, each is usually handled separately, and no one strategy seems to work best for all students or all circumstances. It is unlikely that real benefits will come from limited changes in a single aspect of schooling. Instead, simultaneous attention to curriculum and instruction, school organization and governance, and relationships inside and outside the school is needed. Thus comprehensive approaches incorporating many strategies, involving parents, the community, and the school seem most promising. They must address the multiple risk factors and seek to build protections against them. Strategies will have to be adapted to local situations, and it will probably be necessary to make multiyear commitments to create and sustain change. Some of the most promising strategies are described below.

Conclusions on Disciplined Environments

Research on the elements that strengthen disciplined school environments is extensive and provides much guidance for program development. It indicates that whereas the mere adoption of a "get tough" policy seems ineffective, a combination of the following approaches is more likely to prove useful in the long run: a strong emphasis on the academic mission of the school; firm, fair, and consistently enforced discipline standards; and an ethic of caring that guides staff-student relationships.

This report has outlined how changes in curricular standards and organization, and school organization and management can affect learning environments. The following were found to be particularly significant:

- Tracking generally leads to discipline problems for students in low ability groups, and its elimination would help them greatly;
- Smaller schools, self-contained classes, and teacher involvement beyond the classroom all seem to contribute to the sense of caring;

- Alternative schools can also communicate a caring attitude and markedly improve student behavior;
- Suspension is not a very successful disciplinary measure, and in-school alternatives seem to be used for less serious offenses; and
- Principals who focus on instructional leadership and interpersonal relationships, and share planning with teachers are successful in reducing discipline problems in addition to increasing the level of student achievement.

These school strategies should also contribute in the long run to higher graduation rates (Goal 2) since they will help engage students more fully in learning.

Research on classroom management and organization is also well developed, but only at the elementary level. It shows that introducing rules at the beginning of the school year is essential for establishing and maintaining order, but the meaning of order varies by the task and situation. It does not necessarily mean silence and rigid compliance. Loosely structured settings, challenging assignments, and some efforts to stop misbehavior raise the risk of even more misbehavior unless the teacher has strong classroom management skills. Cooperative learning can improve achievement and interpersonal relations, and teachers' expectations influence student achievement. Low-achieving students do less well when teachers expect little from them than when they provide more assistance. There is little evidence, on the other hand, that many of the commercial classroom approaches to discipline are effective.

Conclusions on Drugs and Schools

There is some evidence of successful efforts to reduce students' use of drugs, but many specific approaches require further study before they can be prescribed as components of a successful program.

The most promising approaches are comprehensive, combining the teaching of resistance skills with correcting misperceptions about the prevalence of drug use. These, along with programs that teach personal and social skills (or "life skills") have consistently produced short-term reductions in substance use. There is some evidence that life skills/resistance skills programs project relatively well to a broad

range of students as long as they are implemented in a culturally sensitive and relevant manner. Programs involving peer leaders often produce somewhat better results than those led by adults. Ongoing booster curricula are needed throughout the middle grades and senior high school to maintain positive impact on student behavior.

While more research is needed on these topics, the accomplishments of the past decade should nevertheless be recognized. Policymakers must (1) identify the nature and extent of the drug problem, and adopt the appropriate program which may require modifications to fit particular circumstances; (2) commit to continuous evaluation to ascertain program impact on student behavior, as well as on attitudes toward and knowledge about drug use; and (3) periodically assess the state of the art in drug use prevention to determine accurately what works and what doesn't.

Conclusions on Violence in Schools

Violence prevention curricula and training in conflict resolution have been studied extensively in terms of their aim to curtail student fights and assaults, and change attitudes toward solving problems with violence. While the results to date are encouraging, the research on this topic remains inconclusive.

A program to coordinate the efforts of schools and law enforcement agencies resulted in reduced discipline problems in a pilot school district. On the other hand, strategies to keep weapons and intruders out of schools are varied and largely untested. Nor is there much research on staff training or other actions schools might take to reduce violence. Other areas, such as gang activity and community coordination to reduce violence, are difficult to study because of their complexity. The most extensive research on gang problems suggests that a coordinated effort encompassing schools, job training programs, and other agencies may be needed.

Resources

National Resources

The following U.S. Department of Education publications are available free of charge from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852, or by calling 301–468–2600 (toll free 1–800–SAY NO TO):

- *Success Stories from Drug-Free Schools: A Guide for Educators, Parents, and Policymakers*, 1991.
- *Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention*, 1990.
- *Learning to Live Drug Free: A Curriculum Model for Prevention*, 1990.
- *What Works: Schools Without Drugs*, 1989.
- *Drug Prevention Curricula: A Guide to Selection and Implementation*, 1988.
- *National Commission on Drug-Free Schools. Toward a Drug-Free Generation: A Nation's Responsibility*, 1990.

The National Youth Gang Information Center sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice provides free information on model designs for school-based programs, gang awareness curricula, and education-related bibliographies. They can be contacted at 4301 North Fairfax Dr., Suite 730, Arlington, VA 22203, or at 1–800–446–4264.

Suggested Readings

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FIRST—Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching

NCES—National Center for Education Statistics

OAS—Office of the Assistant Secretary

PIP—Programs for the Improvement of Practice

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